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Psychological Evaluation of Mr. Kushtrim Abazaga
DOB: 08/19/82

10/20/13

Lawrence Gerzog, Esq.
233 Broadway, Suite 2707
New York, New York 10279

Dear Mr. Gerzog:

Please find herein a report of a psychological evaluation with regard to Mr. Kushtrim Abazaga. This report is based upon a 3-hour interview with Mr. Abazaga at MDC Brooklyn on 10/15/13, the letters of support from friends and family, as well as an interpretation of the psychometric tests noted below. The current context needs to be considered together with the cultural underpinnings and the socio-political context in which the alleged offenses were committed.

Mr. Abazaga is a thirty-one-year-old single man, who prior to his incarceration, was living with his family in the Bronx, New York. He was born and raised in Kosovo. During his youth, he was caught up, as all who lived there were, in the confusing and treacherous times that lead to horrible, and as yet incompletely understood and unknown, atrocities.

It is difficult, if not impossible, from our current vantage point of safety and security, where we are warm, dry and fed, to understand a world and a life that has been torn apart by political warfare, by brutal atrocities, ongoing threats to life, fear, uncertainty and where, within a short time, one's friends become one's enemies. This report seeks to determine whether Mr. Abazaga is currently suffering, or was in the recent past, or at the time of committing the offense to which he pled guilty, from an Axis I Disorder as defined by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-V), specifically PTSD- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Presenting Problem: Kushtrim Abazaga is a thirty-one-year-old man who has pled guilty to "Conspiracy to Distribute and Possess With Intent to Distribute Marijuana."

Details of the offense are well known to you and consequently they will not be covered here, with the exception of those particulars that are salient to Mr. Abazaga's cognitive and affective states.

Socioeconomic Data: (brief summary)

Mr. Abazaga was born and grew up in Djakovo, a small village in Kosovo.

Mr. Abazaga's father was employed by Ereniku, a government owned industrial enterprise company as a manager of sales and purchases.

Mr. Abazaga's mother was employed by the government run health and pension association.

Prior to the war in the Former Yugoslavia, they had a comfortable life with a good income. He is the oldest of four siblings. As the political tension grew in Kosovo, and during the time of Milosevic's rule, both parents lost their jobs in 1990. Life began changing dramatically for the whole family: persecution, police investigations, threats to the family, ethnic cleansing, fear and terror became part of every day. The letters submitted to United States District Court by family members describe some of the traumatic history pertaining to those times. Kushtrim's father was able to leave for USA and later on obtain political asylum. The family joined in 1999. The family's written documents and the information obtained from Kushtrim during our interview on 10/15/13 all speak to Kushtrim taking on a responsible caretaking role for the whole family.

Past Medical History: Mr. Abazaga has never received any psychiatric or psychological evaluations or treatment.

Behavioral Assessment: Mr. Abazaga appeared alert, attentive, and oriented in all spheres. He was calm and extremely courteous. He had no difficulties understanding questions. His answers were clear, detailed, and cogent. There were no indications of delusions, hallucinations, or a formal thought disorder. At all times, Mr. Abazaga was assiduous in trying to present all sides. He did not obfuscate nor did he make remarks that were angry or bitter.

Tests: Mr. Abazaga was administered a number of tests to assess the presence of PTSD symptoms.

1. Harvard Trauma Questionnaire (HTQ)
2. Hopkins Symptom Checklist-25.
3. Patient Health Questionnaire 15-Item Somatic Symptom Severity Scale (PHQ-15)
4. Brief Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-Brief)

These are highly reliable and valid psychological instruments used to evaluate the effects of present and past trauma and symptoms of anxiety and depression.

Formulation: Mr. Abazaga appears to meet full criteria for the diagnosis of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. This is based upon the interpretation of the tests listed above, as well as his descriptions and demeanor during the clinical interview. The following are the criteria for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder as found in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-V):

A. The person has been exposed to a traumatic event in which both of the following were present:

(1) the person experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others

Mr. Abazaga experienced a number of events between 1990-1999 that clearly fall into this category. The surrounding and evacuation of his village is most likely the most poignant; he was stopped several times at checkpoints wherein his safety was clearly in question.

(2) the person's response involved intense fear, helplessness, or horror

At a very young age, Mr. Abazaga felt fear and horror, in addition to his overriding sense of personal responsibility for his family.

B. The traumatic event is persistently re-experienced in one (or more) of the following ways:

(1) recurrent and intrusive distressing recollections of the events, including images, thoughts or perceptions

Mr. Abazaga stated emphatically that he tries very hard not to think about the events during the war. Nevertheless, he has intrusive thoughts, pictures, and feelings that rise unbidden to the surface.

(2) recurrent distressing dreams of the event

Mr. Abazaga has recurrent nightmares wherein he is helpless and trapped.

(3) acting or feeling as if the traumatic event were recurring (includes a sense of reliving the experience, illusions, hallucinations, and dissociative flashback episodes, including those that occur on awakening or when intoxicated)

Mr. Abazaga has flashbacks. These were only made clear to him during the period of incarceration and manifested during the clinical interview.

(4) intense psychological distress at exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble aspects of the traumatic event

Mr. Abazaga, as noted above, has tried to cope through the mechanism of avoidance. Nevertheless, at times, he is swamped by a thought, reminiscence or feeling that evokes past traumas.

(5) physiological reactivity on exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event

Mr. Abazaga alternates between fear, anger and sadness during the interview and while recounting events from the past: he cried openly when recalling the events before and after the war.

C. Persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma and numbing of general responsiveness (not present before the trauma), as indicated by three (or more) of the following:

(1) efforts to avoid thoughts, feelings, or conversations, associated with the trauma

As noted above, Mr. Abazaga has tried to avoid thinking about any of the circumstances that were traumatic before, during or after the war.

(2) efforts to avoid activities, places, or people that arouse recollections of the trauma

(3) inability to recall an important aspect of the trauma

Mr. Abazaga could recall many salient details. However, he did report a kind of "motivated forgetting" akin to repression that has served to insulate him from the worst memories.

(4) markedly diminished interest or participation in significant activities

Mr. Abazaga is decidedly anhedonic.

(5) feeling of detachment or estrangement from others

Mr. Abazaga does not report feeling detached, although he feels his emotions are attenuated.

(6) restricted range of affect (e.g., unable to have loving feelings)

He does feel fear of loss.

(7) sense of foreshortened future (e.g., does not expect to have a career, marriage, children, or a normal lifespan)

Mr. Abazaga had a very difficult time imagining the future or discussing it with a sense of pleasurable anticipation.

D. Persistent symptoms of increasing arousal (not present before the trauma) as indicated by two (or more) of the following:

(1) difficulty falling or staying asleep

Mr. Abazaga has trouble sleeping. He is restless and anxious. He is taking medication for his symptoms: Amitriptyline 10mg.

(2) irritability or outbursts of anger

At times.

(3) difficulty concentrating

Yes

(4) hyper vigilance

Mr. Abazaga is anxious and overly cautious.

(5) exaggerated startle response

Very much so. Prison triggers this especially.

Diagnoses:

Axis I	Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
Axis II	Adjustment Disorder with Anxiety and Depressed Mood
Axis III	None
Axis IV	Legal difficulties
GAF	60, Highest in the past 12 months

Impressions and Conclusions: Mr. Kushtrim Abazaga is a thirty-one-year-old man who is presently charged with "Conspiracy to Distribute and Possess With Intent to Distribute Marijuana" Fully aware of the present charges and his responsibility in all alleged charges placed upon him; during our 3-hour interview, Mr. Abazaga made every effort to present his past history in a fair manner, sans bitterness or self pity. He is only 31 years old and feels overburdened by life experiences. The incarceration and possible deportation is yet another disruption that might wreak havoc in the life of his family. It is obvious that Mr. Abazaga has never fully processed the traumatic experiences he has endured in his lifetime, and that the psychological turmoil of this failure to integrate these experiences into his life has impaired his ability to make decisions that are in his best interest. His judgment has been accentuated by his inner turmoil and past traumatization dating to the years in Kosovo. It is possible to hypothesize that the unprocessed emotional trauma and internalized fear, for his own life and the life of his family, may have impaired his ability to intelligently and with full awareness make decisions that are in his best interest. When assessing the severity of Mr. Abazaga's charged crime, in my opinion, it is necessary to understand that years of loss, fear, violence, victimization, and humiliation he has endured during his early youth have profoundly affected his life.

New York, New York
October 20, 2013

/s/ Jelisaveta S. Rolovic

Jelisaveta Sanja Rolovic, Ph.D.

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EDUCATION

1989-1996 *Doctor of Philosophy in Clinical Psychology, Ph.D.*
Derner Institute for Advanced Psychological Studies, Adelphi University, NY

1989-1991 *Master of Arts in Psychology, M.A.*
Derner Institute for Advanced Psychological Studies, Adelphi University, NY

1983-1988 *Master of Science in Psychotherapy, M.S.*
Department of Psychiatry, School of Medicine, University of Belgrade, Yugoslavia

1976-1981 *Graduate Psychologist, BA*
Department of Clinical Psychology, Faculty of Psychology,
University Belgrade, Yugoslavia

TRAINING in PSYCHOTHERAPY

2007 *Dulwich Center for Narrative Therapy*
Narrative Therapy Training and Certificate- 5 week training with Michel White

1987-1990 *Ackerman Institute for Family Therapy, New York, NY*
Family Therapy Training-Certificate in Family Therapy

1985-1987 *Tavistock Clinic, London, U.K. and Institute for Mental Health,*
Belgrade, Yugoslavia - Training in Family Therapy

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

1999-present Private Practice in Psychotherapy-New York, NY

1996-2010 Founder & Director-Program for Refugee Mental Health
NGO - American Yugoslav Medical Society (AYMS), NY/Serbia

1999- 2010 NGO COMMITTEE ON MENTAL HEALTH- Senior Consultant & Clinical Services Supervisor
Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CONGO)

1996-2006 Adjunct Faculty/ Ackerman Institute for the Family, New York, NY.
Director of Research- Depression in Context - Clinical Project

1999- 2004 Expert Consultant to United Nations; Refugee Resettlement Programs
& Home Land Security Office of Immigration Services

1998-2002 Senior Psychologist & Supervisor-Bellevue/NYU Program for Survivors of Torture,
New York University School of Medicine, New York, NY

1997-2000 Senior Researcher & Clinical Consultant - Refugee Health Program - Department of Health, City of New York, NY

1994-1999 Senior Psychotherapist - Center for Marital and Family Therapy, New York

1992-1999 Psychology Intern - Manhattan Psychiatric Center, New York, APA approved Clinical Internship

1990-1999 Clinical Member & Research Assistant-Ackerman Institute for the Family; Child Sexual Abuse - Clinical Project

1991-1992 Consulting Psychologist - Educational Records Bureau, New York, NY;

1989-1990 Clinical Psychology Extern - Long Island Medical Center, Children's Day Hospital, Hillside, NY

1989-1992 Teaching Assistant - Derner Institute for Advanced Psychological Studies; Center for Psychological Services,
Adelphi University, NY

1983-1988 Clinical Psychologists - University of Belgrade-Department of Neurology & Psychiatry; Inpatient Clinic Center: "Dr.
Dragisa Misovic", Belgrade, Yugoslavia

FACULTY, TEACHING AND SUPERVISORY EXPERIENCE

- 2013- 2016 Board of Directors- AFTA (American Family Therapy Academy)
- 2011- Present AFTA- (American Family Therapy Academy) Chair, Human Rights Committee
- 1990- Present Alumna, Ackerman Institute for the Family, NY
- 1999-2008 Faculty Appointment - Clinical Instructor in Psychiatry & Supervisor in Family Therapy
Department of Psychiatry, New York University School of Medicine
- 2002-present Approved Supervisor in Family Therapy
AFTA - American Family Therapy Academy

Conference Appointments:

- Brief Presentations Co-Chair AFTA June 2014 Conference- Athens GA
- Organizing Committee AFTA June 2011 Conference- San Francisco, CA
- Chair IFTA March 2009- World Conference in Family Therapy, Portoroz, Slovenija

PRESENTATIONS, WORKSHOPS & SEMINARS (selected)

- Systemic Oriented Family Therapy Interventions to response of disaster
Facilitators: Sanja Rolovic & Elana Katz, AFTA Chicago, June 2013
- Rolovic, J. Trauma and Recovery: A Path Towards Resiliency. Workshop, Psihoplos, Novi Sad, Serbia, April 2013
- Rolovic, J., Shahini, M., Rolland J., Intersecting Resiliency: A Kosova- Serb Story Told Ten Years Later.
AFTA San Francisco, June 2012
- Rolovic, J., Wetzel, N., Lopez, G., Working with Families Facing Deportation- AFTA, Baltimore, June 2011
- Rolovic, J., Shamaï, M., Weingarten, W. Three National Perspectives on How Connections to One's Country Impact Clinicians and
Clinical Work- EFTA-European Family Therapy Association- Conference in Paris, October 2010
- Rolovic, J. Narrating our Past, Constructing our Future. Terra, Rijeka, Croatia, Workshop, August 2010
- Rolovic, J. Family Therapy in Bosnia- Looking into the Future. Sarajevo, Bosnia, Workshop. October 2010
- Rolovic, J. Opening Ceremony Presentation- The Future of Family therapy, IFTA World Conference, Slovenia, March, 2009
- Rolovic, J. & Andolfi, M., Nermina Becirevic, Zdenka Pantic, Miran Mozina, Mila Goldner-Vukov
The ethics of life and the ethics of belonging: Family Therapy in the Former Yugoslavia- Reflections of Therapists
Sub Plenary IFTA World Conference, Slovenia, March, 2009
- Rolovic, J. MULTIDIMENSIONAL FAMILY TREATMENT APPROACHES TO IMMIGRATION: STRENGTHENING
IDENTITY NARRATIVES AND DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVES- Workshop
Ackerman Institute for the Family, NYC, November 2008
- Rolovic, J., Shamaï M., Weingarten K. LOVE AND LOATHING: HOW INTIMATE CONNECTIONS
TO ONE'S COUNTRY IMPACT CLINICIANS AND CLINICAL WORK- American Family Therapy Academy (AFTA),
Annual Meeting, 2008
- Rolovic, J. Narrating Our Past: A Serb-Kosovar Story of Unresolved Mourning
American Family Therapy Academy (AFTA), Annual Meeting, 2008.
- Rolovic, J. Immigration and Identity – Workshop
Ackerman Institute for the Family, NYC, November 2007.
- Rolovic, J. Intimacy and Closeness in Couples
Workshops in Belgrade, Novi Sad – Serbia, September 2007.

Rolovic, J. Being Serb: Narratives of Pride and Narratives of Shame
Workshop. International Narrative Therapy Conference. Oslo, Norway, June 2007.

Rolovic, J. Therapists as Cultural Brokers: The Application of Narrative Therapy to Working with Intercultural Couples –Workshop-
Child Study Center – New York University – School of Medicine, 2006.

Rolovic, J. – Towards Reconciliation in the Post Communist Countries of the Former Yugoslavia – Workshop - University of
Belgrade, Serbia, 2006.

Rolovic, J. – Touched by War Zones – American Family Therapy Academy. Annual Conference, 2005.

Rolovic, J. – In the Aftermath of Ethnic War – A Glance into the Therapist Suitcase – Workshop - International Family Therapy
Association. Annual Conference, 2004.

Rolovic, J. - Growing Up in War Zone - Understanding War and Teaching Peace-Chair
American Family Therapy Academy (AFTA), Annual Meeting, 2003.

Rolovic, J. - Mutual Mentoring: Self-Disclosure with a Colleague in Whom You Trust: The Ultimate in Resilience
Building.Association for Women in Psychology (AWP) National Conference, Jersey City, NJ, and March 2003

Rolovic, J. - Therapists as Cultural Brokers: The Application of narrative Therapy to Working with Intercultural Couples - Workshop.
Teachers College Columbia University, New York, NY, February 2003

Rolovic, J. - Avoiding Re-traumatization: Interviewing Political Asylum Seekers.
Sponsored by the Immigration & Naturalization Service - Training of asylum officers. Workshop, Atlanta, Georgia, 2000.

Rolovic, J. - Helping the Family Heal: Family Based Approach to Treatment of War Related Trauma.
New York University School of Medicine. New York, 2000 - workshop

Rolovic, J. - Mental Health Issues of Immigrants - Society for Public Health Education.
Annual Conference. New York, 2000 - workshop

Rolovic, J. - Mental Health Services for Women & Children.
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Washington DC, 1999

Rolovic, J. - Drawing Distinction between History and Future-working with Refugees from Bosnia. Office of Refugee Resettlement -
National Conference, Washington DC, 1999

Rolovic, J. - The Refugee Experience: Trauma, Integration & Transformation.
Conference Chair & Presenter, International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies, NY
Chapter. Annual Conference. New York, 1999

Rolovic, J. - Violence & Healing: Developmental, Cross-cultural Intergenerational Perspective.
Conference Chair & Presenter, International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies, NY
Chapter. Annual Conference. New York, 1998

Rolovic, J. - Child Sexual Abuse: Prevalence and Treatment.
Institute for Mental Health, Belgrade, Yugoslavia, 1996 - workshop

Rolovic, J. - Working with Mothers of Sexually Abused Daughters
Berkshire Medical Center, Pittsfield, MA. 1995

DeMeyo, Rolovic, J., Sheinberg, M., Walker, G.
Disclosing Incest-Making Families Safe for Children - workshop
Ackerman Institute for Family Therapy, New York, NY 1991

BOOK- translations to Serbian

Trauma i Oporavak: Struktura traumatskog doživljaja Herman, J.
Translated Miocinovic, Lj. & Rolovic, J. - Psihopolis, 2012.

Narativna Psihoterapija: Socijalna Konstrukcija Preferiranih Realnosti Freedman, J., Combs, G.
Translated Miocinovic, Lj. & Rolovic, J. - Psihopolis, 2009.

PUBLICATIONS –selected

Rolovic J. (2012) Umesto Pregovora: Beskonacna proslost i potreba za svedocenjem za buducnost
Foreword in Trauma i Oporavak: Struktura traumatskog doživljaja Herman, J. Psihopolis.

Rolovic, J. (2012) Immigration and Identity: Responding to Couples Who Experienced the Trauma of Dislocation and Atrocity (submitted for publication IFTA Journal)

Rolovic, J. (2011) Narrating our Past: A Serb-Kosovar Story of Unresolved Mourning
A Glance into the Therapist Suitcase (unpublished manuscript)

Rolovic, J. (2009) Narrative Therapy in a "New" Language – Why Now?
Foreword in Narativna Psihoterapija: Socijalna Konstrukcija Preferiranih Realnosti Freedman, J., Combs, G.- Psihopolis

Rolovic, J. Licerena Quinn, R. (2005) Volume 1. Touched by War Zones, Near and Far: Oscillations of Despair and Hope, American Family Therapy Academy – Monograph Series, Vol1, 1, 8-17

Rolovic, J. (2004) Growing Up in a War Zone
AFTA Newsletter, 89, 20-21

Rolovic, J. Doctoral Dissertation (1996): Mother-Daughter Relationship in Incest Families – Divided Loyalty: Myth or Reality

Rolovic, J. (1984) Psychosocial Reactions to Somatic-Chronic Illness.
Psihologija, 13, 1, 68-74

SOCIETY AFFILIATIONS

International Family Therapy Association – Chair - Host Committee 2009

American Family Therapy Academy (AFTA) –

APA- American Psychological Association

International Society for the Traumatic Stress Studies

NGO Committee of Mental Health – Advisor for the United Nations

American Yugoslav Medical Society – Refugee Mental Health Program- Director